Section 6. Holding Aircraft

4-6-1. CLEARANCE TO HOLDING FIX

Consider operational factors such as length of delay, holding airspace limitations, navigational aids, altitude, meteorological conditions when necessary to clear an aircraft to a fix other than the destination airport. Issue the following:

a. Clearance limit (if any part of the route beyond a clearance limit differs from the last routing cleared, issue the route the pilot can expect beyond the clearance limit).

PHRASEOLOGY-
EXPECT FURTHER CLEARANCE VIA (routing).

EXAMPLE-
"Expect further clearance via direct Stillwater V-O-R, Victor Two Twenty-Six Snapy intersection, direct Newark."

b. Holding instructions.

1. Holding instructions may be eliminated when you inform the pilot that no delay is expected.

2. When the pattern is charted, you may omit all holding instructions except the charted holding direction and the statement "as published." Always issue complete holding instructions when the pilot requests them.

NOTE-
The most generally used holding patterns are depicted on U.S. Government or commercially produced low/high altitude en route, area, and STAR Charts.

PHRASEOLOGY-
CLEARED TO (fix), HOLD (direction), AS PUBLISHED,

or

CLEARED TO (fix), NO DELAY EXPECTED.

c. EFC. Do not specify this item if no delay is expected.

1. When additional holding is expected at any other fix in your facility's area, state the fix and your best estimate of the additional delay. When more than one fix is involved, state the total additional en route delay (omit specific fixes).

NOTE-
Additional delay information is not used to determine pilot action in the event of two-way communications failure. Pilots are expected to predicate their actions solely on the provisions of 14 CFR Section 91.185.

PHRASEOLOGY-
EXPECT FURTHER CLEARANCE (time),

and if required,

ANTICIPATE ADDITIONAL (time in minutes/hours) MINUTE/HOUR DELAY AT (fix),

or

ANTICIPATE ADDITIONAL (time in minutes/hours) MINUTE/HOUR EN ROUTE DELAY.

EXAMPLE-
1. *"Expect further clearance one niner two zero, anticipate additional three zero minute delay at Sweet."*

2. *"Expect further clearance one five one zero, anticipate additional three zero minute en route delay."*

2. When additional holding is expected in an approach control area, state the total additional terminal delay.

PHRASEOLOGY-
EXPECT FURTHER CLEARANCE (time),

and if required,

ANTICIPATE ADDITIONAL (time in minutes/hours) MINUTE/HOUR TERMINAL DELAY.

3. *TERMINAL.* When terminal delays exist or are expected, inform the appropriate center or approach control facility so that the information can be forwarded to arrival aircraft.

4. When delay is expected, issue items in subparas a and b at least 5 minutes before the aircraft is estimated to reach the clearance limit. If the traffic situation requires holding an aircraft that is less than 5 minutes from the holding fix, issue these items immediately.

NOTE-
1. *The AIM indicates that pilots should start speed reduction when 3 minutes or less from the holding fix. The additional 2 minutes contained in the 5-minute requirement are necessary to compensate for different pilot/controller ETAS at the holding fix, minor differences in clock times, and provision for sufficient planning and reaction times.*

2. *When holding is necessary, the phrase "delay indefinite" should be used when an accurate estimate of the delay time and the reason for the delay cannot immediately be determined; i.e., disabled aircraft on the runway, terminal*

or center sector saturation, weather below landing minimums, etc. In any event, every attempt should be made to provide the pilot with the best possible estimate of his/her delay time and the reason for the delay. Controllers/supervisors should consult, as appropriate, with personnel (other sectors, weather forecasters, the airport management, other facilities, etc.) who can best provide this information.

PHRASEOLOGY-
DELAY INDEFINITE, (reason if known), EXPECT FURTHER CLEARANCE (time). (After determining the reason for the delay, advise the pilot as soon as possible.)

EXAMPLE-
"Cleared to Drewe, hold west, as published, expect further clearance via direct Sidney V-O-R one three one five, anticipate additional two zero minute delay at Woody."

"Cleared to Aston, hold west on Victor two twenty-five, seven mile leg, left turns, expect further clearance one niner two zero, anticipate additional one five minute terminal delay."

"Cleared to Wayne, no delay expected."

"Cleared to Wally, hold north, as published, delay indefinite, snow removal in progress, expect further clearance one one three zero."

4-6-2. CLEARANCE BEYOND FIX

a. If no delay is expected, issue a clearance beyond the clearance limit as soon as possible and, whenever possible, at least 5 minutes before the aircraft reaches the fix.

b. Include the following items when issuing clearance beyond a clearance limit:

1. Clearance limit or approach clearance.

2. Route of flight. Specify one of the following:

(a) Complete details of the route (airway, route, course, fix(es), azimuth course, heading, arc, or vector.)

(b) The phrase "via last routing cleared." Use this phrase only when the most recently issued routing to the new clearance limit is valid and verbiage will be reduced.

PHRASEOLOGY-
VIA LAST ROUTING CLEARED.

3. Assigned altitude if different from present altitude.

NOTE-
Except in the event of a two-way communications failure, when a clearance beyond a fix has not been received, pilots are expected to hold as depicted on U.S. Government or commercially produced (meeting FAA requirements) low/high altitude en route and area or STAR charts. If no holding pattern is charted and holding instructions have not been issued, pilots should ask ATC for holding instructions prior to reaching the fix. If a pilot is unable to obtain holding instructions prior to reaching the fix, the pilot is expected to hold in a standard pattern on the course on which the aircraft approached the fix and request further clearance as soon as possible.

4-6-3. DELAYS

a. Advise your supervisor or flow controller as soon as possible when you delay or expect to delay aircraft.

b. When arrival delays reach or are anticipated to reach 30 minutes, take the following action:

1. *EN ROUTE.* The center responsible for transferring control to an approach control facility or, for a nonapproach control destination, the center in whose area the aircraft will land shall issue total delay information as soon as possible after the aircraft enters the center's area. Whenever possible, the delay information shall be issued by the first center controller to communicate with the aircraft.

2. *TERMINAL.* When tower en route control service is being provided, the approach control facility whose area contains the destination airport shall issue total delay information as soon as possible after the aircraft enters its approach control area. Whenever possible, the delay information shall be issued by the first terminal controller to communicate with the aircraft.

3. Unless a pilot requests delay information, the actions specified in subparas 1 and 2 above may be omitted when total delay information is available to pilots via ATIS.

PHRASEOLOGY-
(Airport) ARRIVAL DELAYS (time in minutes/hours).

4-6-4. HOLDING INSTRUCTIONS

When issuing holding instructions, specify:

a. Direction of holding from the fix/waypoint.

b. Holding fix or waypoint.

NOTE-
The holding fix may be omitted if included at the beginning of the transmission as the clearance limit.

c. Radial, course, bearing, track, azimuth, airway, or route on which the aircraft is to hold.

d. Leg length in miles if DME or RNAV is to be used. Specify leg length in minutes if the pilot requests it or you consider it necessary.

e. Direction of holding pattern turns only if left turns are to be made, the pilot requests it, or you consider it necessary.

PHRASEOLOGY-
HOLD (direction) OF (fix/waypoint) ON (specified radial, course, bearing, track, airway, azimuth(s), or route.)

If leg length is specified,

(number of minutes/miles) MINUTE/MILE LEG.

If direction of turn is specified,

LEFT/RIGHT TURNS.

NOTE-
It is mandatory for the controller to issue left or right turns every time a holding pattern is issued for MLS.

f. Issue maximum holding airspeed advisories when an aircraft is:

1. Approved to exceed the maximum airspeed of a pattern, and is cleared into a holding pattern that will protect for the greater speed; or

2. Observed deviating from the holding pattern airspace area; or

3. Cleared into an airspeed restricted holding pattern in which the icon has not been published.

EXAMPLE-
Due to turbulence, a turboprop requests to exceed the recommended maximum holding airspeed. ATCS may clear the aircraft into a pattern that protects for the airspeed request, and shall advise the pilot of the maximum holding airspeed for the holding pattern airspace area.

PHRASEOLOGY-
"MAXIMUM HOLDING AIRSPEED IS TWO ONE ZERO KNOTS."

4-6-5. VISUAL HOLDING POINTS

You may use as a holding fix a location which the pilot can determine by visual reference to the surface if he/she is familiar with it.

PHRASEOLOGY-
HOLD AT (location) UNTIL (time or other condition.)

REFERENCE-
FAAO 7110.65, Visual Holding of VFR Aircraft, Para 7-1-4.

4-6-6. HOLDING FLIGHT PATH DEVIATION

Approve a pilot's request to deviate from the prescribed holding flight path if obstacles and traffic conditions permit.

4-6-7. UNMONITORED NAVAID'S

Separate an aircraft holding at an unmonitored NAVAID from any other aircraft occupying the course which the holding aircraft will follow if it does not receive signals from the NAVAID.

4-6-8. ILS PROTECTION/CRITICAL AREAS

When conditions are less than reported ceiling 800 feet and/or visibility of 2 miles, do not authorize aircraft to hold below 5,000 feet AGL inbound toward the airport on or within 1 statute mile of the localizer between the ILS OM or the fix used in lieu of the OM and the airport. *USAF.* The holding restriction applies only when an arriving aircraft is between the ILS OM or the fix used in lieu of the OM and the runway.

REFERENCE-
FAAO 7130.3, Holding Pattern Criteria, Para 54 and FIG 20.